

being jealously guarded by a strong democratic party both in and out of Parliament.

The People have their pickets in every constituency—and nurses should get into touch with them, if they realise the danger to personal and professional liberty of the College policy, which aims to control the entire economic and disciplinary conditions of Trained Nurses *throughout their professional lives.*

*Nothing short of an absolute nursing monopoly.*

The name of the Honble. Arthur Stanley, M.P., is widely associated with this policy as Chairman of the Council of the College, but the creators of the policy, and most determined supporters of it, are Sir Cooper Perry, of Guy's Hospital, and Sir Henry Burdett, of "anti-registration" notoriety. Both are men of peculiarly autocratic temperament where women are concerned, and the former has controlled probationers and nurses in the narrow environment of a Nursing School for so long, that it is no doubt difficult for him to focus his relations with trained nurses free of his control outside, and especially with those who are determined not to submit to it.

## POOR LAW NURSES AND THE COLLEGE OF NURSING, LTD.

A Conference was held at Sheffield last Saturday of representatives of all the Nurses' Sections in the country of the National Association of Poor Law Officers' Association. It was the first of its kind, and importance was attached to it.

At a meeting recently held at Manchester sixty nurses signed the membership roll. It was very well attended by the matrons of local institutions. Mr. W. G. Leggatt, President of the Branch, presided, and Mr. T. Percival, President of the National Association attended and made a long speech. He disposed of the misstatement that the Association was antagonistic to the College of Nursing. That was not so, but they had approached the College and asked for representation for the Poor Law Service. This had been promised. Ten representatives had been nominated for office on the Provisional Council, and not one had been accepted. Mr. Percival wished to make it perfectly clear that the claim for representation which the Association was making for the nurses was representation on the Provisional Council of the College—representation now. He desired to emphasise the fact that it was now, when the foundations of the scheme were being laid, that Poor-Law nurses must get in "on the ground floor" to see that conditions were prescribed suitable to their requirements.

Mr. Percival then alluded to the malignancy with which the Association had been attacked in connection with the College of Nursing by the Nursing press (he alluded no doubt to the lay-edited proprietary journals for nurses) and said it was only equalled by the ignorance of the people by whom the articles were written. "It would

hardly be possible to imagine that there were people writing for newspapers to-day who knew so little about the Poor Law!"

### AN ILLOGICAL ATTITUDE OF OPPOSITION.

Continuing, Mr. Percival referred to the large number of trained nurses employed in other branches of Poor-Law work, such as Woman Visitors, Assistant Relieving Officers, and—what was perhaps most significant of all—Workhouse Matrons. The people who were misrepresenting the Association's views, who were distorting statements made at Association meetings, were interested in the hospital nurses alone. He did not want to say a single unkind word, but he did say that when the people who were creating all this misrepresentation realised that if the Poor-Law nurses succeeded, as they would undoubtedly succeed, in organising a powerful body, there would be an influence in the Council of the College of Nursing in accordance with the numerical strength of the Poor-Law nurses, and that was what the opponents were frightened of. He had been asked over and over again to write to the nursing press to repudiate statements which had been made. It was no good fighting with people who fought with poisoned weapons. For some time the nursing papers had lost their heads and come down to the statement that Poor-Law nurses were "rough, contemptuous, and rude." That remark needed no comment of his. It was unfortunate that the attitude of the nursing press had been supported by a small section of members of the Poor-Law Service. There was a small section of Poor-Law officers who were ashamed of the Poor-Law. That people who were ashamed of the Poor-Law should be in the Poor-Law at all he could not understand. Why did they stop in it? They drew salary from the Poor-Law—the money was good enough, but the association with the Poor-Law was not good enough. If they did not want to associate with the Poor-Law, let them get out of it. The Poor-Law did not want them, and could do without them, and so could the hospitals. Unfortunately, this small section had influence in the Poor-Law Infirmary Matrons' Association. The National Poor-Law Officers' Association had no quarrel with the Matrons' Association. A number of Matrons amongst his acquaintance had asked him for his opinion as to whether they should join the Infirmary Matrons' Association, and he had always advised that they should. He believed that to-day every officer in the Service should, in addition to belonging to the National Association, join the Association for his or her particular class. There was nothing between the Matrons' Association and the Poor-Law Officers' Association, except that the former had not realised the position, and they did not realise the fact that no body of superior officers could represent the rank and file unless the rank and file authorised them to do so. Their attitude of opposition was entirely illogical and short-sighted. The Association did not want to be placed in the position of opposing the Bill, but

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